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DREADNOUGHT

For International Socialism

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SPECIAL TRADE UNION CONGRESS FAILS.

ANOTHER BETRAYAL. NO ACTION TAKEN TO STOP THE ATTACK ON SOVIET RUSSIA AND TO DEFEND THE INTERESTS OF BRITISH WORKERS.

The long-demanded conference called to decide what action British Labour shall take to stop the capitalist intervention in Russia has proved a dismal failure. It has achieved nothing, nothing, nothing. It has ended with the unanimous adoption of mere pious resolutions. The proceedings were flat, dismally flat, from start to finish. The attendance was smaller than is usual at Trade Union Congresses. There was no fighting spirit amongst the delegates. One wondered: "Where is the rebel rank and file?"

The special Trade Union Congress was held in the Central Hall, Westminster, on December 9th and 10th. The first day was devoted mainly to the nationalisation of the mines and a protest against profiteering. The question of Russia was sandwiched in between some more or less fugitive matters on the second day. The attempt thus to minimise its importance was, of course, deliberate. The duty of acting in solidarity with our Russian comrades is one that those who at present control the Labour Executive are anxious to avoid.

Remember the sequence:—

(1) The Southport Labour Party Conference in June declared in favour of industrial action to stop the intervention in Russia and instructed the Party Executive to approach the Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress to arrange the strike.

(2) The Triple Alliance, also at Southport and in June, called on the Trade Union Parliamentary Committee to summon a special conference to discuss direct action to stop the intervention, and also decided to ballot the members of the Triple Alliance to decide whether they would strike.

(3) At Glasgow, in September, the Trade Union Congress Committee was censured for refusing to call a special Congress on Russia, and was ordered to call the Conference immediately after again interviewing the Government.

(4) Special Conference has now been held, but this Special Conference did not discuss action. The resolution before it did not suggest action of any kind, it merely expressed profound dissatisfaction with the Government's reply, and asked for passports for delegates appointed by the Parliamentary Committee to go to Russia.

WILL THE DELEGATES BE TRUSTWORTHY?

A delegate asked who would appoint the delegates to go to Russia. The Chairman replied that it was intended the Parliamentary Committee should do it, but he was willing to allow an amendment to be moved that Congress should do it. No such amendment was moved. Apparently Congress was satisfied to allow the Parliamentary Committee to have the choice. Therefore, we shall probably see appointed such men as J. H. Thomas, Arthur Henderson, J. R. Clynes, or some other time-serving opportunists. Such men cannot be trusted to report impartially on Russia. Probably even though they are opponents of the Soviet Government the Government will refuse to allow them to go, because by so doing it not only centres working-class enthusiasm around a group of men who will not fight for working-class emancipation, but also because the passport controversy will tend to side track the movement to act against the intervention.

How amusedly the capitalist class must be grinning at this request from its slaves for passports to go to Russia!

How triumphantly militant capitalism must be sneering at this which they, with reason, must be calling a display of cowardly folly by the British organised workers! For two years the Government, with guns, aeroplanes, tanks, with all the rigours of the blockade, with intrigues, plots, and the grossest and most impudent falsehoods, has been fighting the working class revolution which happens to have begun in Russia. Now, at last, after two years the Trade Union Congress asks passport facilities in order that it may find out what is happening!

Passports to Russia! The demand most ominously recalls that other: Passports to Stockholm, and all the big talk that came to nothing which accompanied it.

Some people argue that the Conference was an advance; they weakly urge that the resolution was unanimous, that John Ward was hissed, that if the passports are refused "then the workers will——."

Comrades, do not gull yourselves. The Westminster Congress marks a check in the Labour movement's advance on the Russian question, and in the revolutionary progress of the British working class. The windbag opportunists who utter more or less revolutionary sentiments under the stimulus of popular applause have marched with the revolutionary elements of the rank and file with a great deal of bluster and self-advertisement right up to the point of action—having arrived there, they have deliberately turned tail.

These windbags shouted very loudly for direct action when they knew that, though "direct action" was popular, a majority of the delegates to any Labour Congress would vote against it.

They still shouted for direct action when, though they saw that a majority of the Conference would vote for it, they knew that a reactionary executive would prevent the execution of the vote. But now that the executive has been censured and sharply told that it must obey the vote of Congress, the windbags have discarded the "Direct Action" policy. They have flinched from the consequences of their own speeches.

J. H. THOMAS REPORTS THE INTERVIEW WITH LLOYD GEORGE.

J. H. Thomas, M.P., in reporting the interview of December 8th between the Parliamentary Committeee and the Prime Minister, all but slurred over the Russian question. He spoke as an apologist for the Government and particularly for Lloyd George. As usual, he was careful to dissociate himself and the Labour movement from any appearance of solidarity with the Soviet Government. But he said, "whatever opinion there might be as to the form of Government in Russia, or the methods of the Russian Government, we have no right to interfere with the affairs of another people. The deputation had asked, he said, for the

"absolute and immediate withdrawal of all troops from Russia and of indirect support to those people fighting Russia by supplies and grants and in various other ways."

The deputation had asked the Prime Minister whether his last speech on Russia in Parliament represented the policy of the Government as a whole.

Thomas observed that Lloyd George's speech differed greatly from that made by Churchill a fortnight before, and he told the Conference that Churchill's face, when Lloyd George was speaking, indicated Cabinet differences on Russia. That is a very old story without even a new dress; its garments are in tatters. Were

THE NEW VIEW.

Bonar Law: "Our social system to be turned upside down. This is a view of the life of society we cannot accept.

we not told when the Liberal Government was leading us into war that we must retain them because the Tories were militant jingoes? Were we not told but recently by the *Herald* that we must "back up" Lloyd George and Wilson because they were working for a Democratic Peace? Now, though Lloyd George has expressly stated that there is to be a "long and sanguinary struggle" in Russia, and though in the very Parliamentary statement to which Thomas referred, Lloyd George acknowledged Churchill's statement as an explanation of Government policy, Thomas was virtually asking the Conference to tolerate Lloyd George on the plea that he was less unfriendly to the Soviets than Churchill. Lloyd George said that from the policy Churchill had enunciated "the Government have no intention of departing." Yet too many people are urging that Lloyd George's policy is to be tolerated because Winston Churchill's is still more unfriendly to the Soviets.

We refuse to tolerate the policies either of Lloyd George or Churchill, and are convinced that there is no essential difference between them.

Thomas, however, tried to produce the impression that the Prime Minister's answer was quite satisfactory. He said:

"The reply of the Prime Minister was that the policy outlined by him in the speech referred to

Continued on next page, col. 1.

was the policy of the Government, and that when the £15,000,000 which was last voted, as agreed by Parliament, was expended no support of any sort or kind is to be given to any further Russian interference.

"But it is only fair to point out that the Prime Minister intimated that that expenditure was incurred in consequence of a promise made to certain people when the war was on with the view of withdrawing some of the forces on the Western front which the Germans would have used unless some efforts were made in that direction."

So Thomas tried to trick the Conference into the belief that the attack of the British Government on Soviet Russia is ended. But the whitewash with which he has endeavoured to cover the sins of the Government cannot erase the real meaning of Lloyd George's statement on Government policy. That policy is still one of war upon the Soviets and the International Workers' Revolution.

What of the Blockade?

When Thomas had finished his address, George Barker, of the South Wales Miners' Federation, asked whether the Parliamentary Committee's deputation had raised the question of the blockade?

Thomas replied that the subject had not been mentioned, because it was not contained in the Glasgow resolution.

That admission should be enough in itself to cause the Trade Union Congress to elect other members to its executive.

It also shows the importance of securing that resolutions which entail action shall contain not merely the spirit of what we desire, but in the letter also shall give explicit and complete instructions.

Mrs. Bamber (Warehouse Workers) asked the Chairman what would happen if the passports were refused. Thomas replied that Mrs. Bamber's Union could then see what it would do about the matter.

The Resolution.

The following resolution was moved by John Hill (Boilermakers), who is now a vice-president of the "Hands off Russia Committee":—

"That this Congress, having heard the report of the deputation which waited upon the Prime Minister on the question of Russia, expresses its profound dissatisfaction. It calls upon the Government immediately to consider the peace overtures made by the Soviet Government, and, further, to raise the blockade and allow facilities for trade between Russia and the outside world. The Congress demands the right of independent and impartial inquiry into the political, industrial, and economic conditions in Russia, and instructs the Parliamentary Committee to appoint a delegation to visit Russia and to demand passport facilities from the Government for this purpose, and that a further report on Russia be considered at our next Special Trades Union Congress."

Robert Williams (Transport Workers) seconded the resolution, and repeated the absurd fable that "Lloyd George, with all his faults, is against the intervention in Russia."

Tom Mann spoke for the first time in the Trade Union Congress as General Secretary of the A.S.E. He showed himself prepared to speak with the same straightforward courage in office which he displayed as an outsider. There are not many men of whom that can be said. We trust that Tom Mann will stand firm. He put himself absolutely in line with the Russian Communists, declaring that they are putting into practice the ideas which the more advanced sections of the British Labour movement have held for twenty-five years. He said that a vigorous minority of the members of his Society would prefer to be making munitions for the Soviet Red Army than for Koltchak and Denikin. He reported that a group of British sailors is serving a sentence of five years imprisonment in Edinburgh gaol because of having refused to go to fight against Soviet Russia. There were men in the transport trade who objected to carrying munitions for the counter-revolution, and he insisted that week by week a revolt of the better men in the country is drawing nearer.

Tom Mann was the first speaker to import any warmth and enthusiasm into the chilly atmosphere of the Conference.

John Ward Hooted.

Colonel John Ward, of the Navvies' Union, and friend of Koltchak, then rose, saying: "Can I speak?"

He was said to be a duly accredited delegate, but his question showed that he knew his position to be insecure.

He was greeted with hissing, hooting, and cries of "traitor." Thomas was on his feet pleading with the delegates.

"Nobody interrupted Mr. Mann. We shall be *ruining* our movement if we refuse to hear Mr. Ward."

Ward proceeded, with some interruption, to declare that the Communists had practically reduced Russia to a state of chaos and anarchy. He gave an entirely new and altogether false version of the dissolving of the Constituent Assembly, with which we deal on another page.

John Ward has long been considered a renegade in the Labour movement, and he aroused a large proportion of the delegates to great anger. The tension relaxed into sympathetic laughter when Jack Jones, who spoke next, said that although "the nearest part of Russia" he had seen was the Whitechapel-road, it was obvious to him that the Soviet Government could not have continued to hold its enemies in check if the majority of the Russian people had not supported it.

J. H. Bromley, of the Engine-drivers' Union, also defended Soviet Russia. He spoke without any attempt at oratory, but as one who is prepared to declare himself frankly at one with the Bolsheviki.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

No delegate demanded direct action. Thus all hope of direct aid to Soviet Russia from the British Trade Union Congress must be postponed till the next Special Congress in February.

We must continue to work to secure the recognition of Soviet Russia and the conclusion of peace on the basis of no annexations, no indemnities, and no interference with the internal affairs, and the complete liberty and independence of Soviet Russia.

Also we must demand the raising of the blockade and the cessation of all hostile acts against Soviet Russia or aid to the enemies of Soviet Russia by munitions, finance, or other supplies, or by the coercion of smaller, weaker and conquered nations to attack Soviet Russia.

The Nationalisation of the Mines.

In the question of Mines Nationalisation the same bluff and the same withdrawal has been practised as in the case of the Russian intervention. In the early part of the year the miners declared that they would positively strike if nationalisation were not conceded immediately. Then they accepted the Coal Commission to inquire into their demands. Then they agreed to accept the Sankey scheme, which fell short of their own compromise demands Then instead of striking, they appealed to the Trade Union Congress for general support and the calling of a special Congress.

Now, at the Special Congress the official resolution carried unanimously was that the decision of Congress shall be deferred for three months until an adjourned Congress in February of next year. If the Government has not by that time decided to legislate on the lines of the Sankey Report, the Trade Union movement will be called on to give effect to Clause C of the Nationalisation resolution passed at Glasgow.

What is this wonderful Clause C, with which it is proposed to smite an obstinate Government? Here it is:—

In the event of the Government still refusing to accept this position, a special Congress shall be convened for the purpose of deciding the form of action to be taken to compel the Government to accept the Majority Report of the Commission.

Another Special Congress! And what then? Still another Special Congress?

Do not be impatient, Comrades. The struggle is very long and tedious, but we must go on wrestling until the reformists have been ousted from the leadership of the organised workers.

J. H. Thomas, of course, pleaded for Parliamentary action. He assured Congress that for this purpose it could be "as powerful as industrial action," and "less costly and inconvenient." Thorne and Brace moved and seconded the resolution; the latter declaring that the Miners' Federation is "a constitutional party, not a set of howling dervishes."

Tom Mann, who said he was not satisfied with the scheme of nationalisation demanded, asked what would be the next step if the Government turned it down. He urged that something definite and practical covered by the term "direct action," and not always covered by the term "constitutional," would be needed.

Robert Smillie, the President of the Miners' Federation, expressed regret that it should be necessary to come there to ask for a postponement of action if a general election were to take place next day. He had not the slightest hope that the Government would allow it to be fought on the question of nationalising the mines. There was nothing that would move this Government but industrial force. The Coal Commission had been secured because the miners had balloted for a strike.

Why not Consult the Rank and File?

But Smillie did not move an amendment to take industrial action. Why? Was he outvoted on the M.F.G.B. Executive? Or does he consider the rank and file miners are unprepared to strike?

Undoubtedly there is less enthusiasm amongst the colliers for nationalisation than would be the case if a better scheme had been put forward. But the miners are a determined and well disciplined body of men. If they decide that the issue is worth striking on, and decide to come out on it, they will be firm and resolute. If Smillie thinks the Sankey scheme worth fighting for, why does he not demand a ballot of the rank and file to decide the course of action? Surely, the President of the M.F.G.B. has influence enough to secure the adoption of so reasonable a course.

We must repeat, however, that the Sankey scheme will do little, either to improve the lot of the collier, or to help the working-class coal consumers. Communism cannot be obtained piece-meal. Communism in the mines will never co-exist with capitalism in other branches of industry and national life. No capitalist Government will agree to socialise the coal industry. The miners must be prepared to overturn the capitalist Government and the entire capitalist system when they enter upon the struggle for real socialisation.

The rebels in the coal areas, as in all other parts of the country, must be busy propagandising for the substitution of the Soviets for Parliament, the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the will to substitute Communism for capitalism. Let the reformists expend their energy on advocating the Sankey scheme, the Communists must preach meanwhile the Soviet Revolution.

Coal from India.

British miners are evidently beginning to understand the menace that Indian coal may be to the economic position they have built up for themselves. Smillie said that:

Already the Government had been making inquiries as to what amount of coal could be brought from India in the event of trouble breaking out. He believed that the money invested in the Indian mines was really British money, the money of "patriots" who were keeping Indian miners working at 4½d. a day. If coal produced by those poor starved workers in the Indian mines were to be brought into this country he would not hesitate to advocate a general strike.

If, if, if, Comrade Smillie; it is always "if!"

Reformist Proposals on Food, Housing, and Finance.

A batch of reformist proposals on food, housing, profiteering, and finance was adopted. The Nationalisation of land, mines, minerals, railways, shipping, and transport facilities was demanded, side by side with the regulation of prices and profits, and a levy on capital. Evidently nationalisation is only a flag to be waved, and it is not expected to realise it; but the nationalisation of all industry was not even demanded. Communism alone can solve the difficulties with which these resolutions dealt.

THE "DAILY HERALD."

An appeal was made on behalf of the *Daily Herald* for £400,000 to be invested as debenture stock at a guaranteed interest of 5 per cent. The investors to be allowed to elect periodically three directors to act with the present three directors and three trustees, who should not be directors. It was stated that the paper was losing £1,700 a week a few months ago; but that the loss has now been halved. Also that its circulation is 300,000.

Our Socialist Comrades abroad will undoubtedly criticise this position adversely. They will say that *The Herald* is not really a Socialist paper, but a sort of Radico-Reformist-bourgeois - pacifist - mildly - Socialistically-flavoured organ, which devotes a large part of its space to prize fights, murders, cinemas, and sensation mongering; nevertheless, it cannot pay its way. Yet, for instance, in Italy, *The Avanti*, which is a genuine Socialist paper, devoting its columns to Socialist, Labour, and political news and argument entirely, has a larger circulation than *The Herald*, and pays its way. In Switzerland, a tiny country, there is a Socialist daily in every fair-sized town, and these newspapers pay their way. It is evidently better to have a paper which is a Socialist paper, even though its size and its circulation are smaller, at first, than a costly reformist venture like *The Herald*.

The Herald, though it started out in its early days to combat the backward policy of the Labour Party, now more and more inclines to support the official Labour Party, and drifts steadily to the right.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND TRADE DISPUTES.

J. H. Thomas stated that the deputation from the Parliamentary Committee on December 8th had raised the question of unemployment amongst the other matters dealt with. The deputation had asked for work, not doles, for the unemployed, but had urged that it was hard to have stopped the dole before Christmas. Lloyd George replied that most of the unemployed were discharged soldiers, who would not lose the dole, or persons who came under the Unemployment Insurance Act. As a matter of fact, 101,000 men and 34,000 women unemployed civilians on November 21st lost the dole The insurance benefit (whether 7/- as it has been hitherto, or 11/- as it is to be) is a mere pittance.

Lloyd George's excuse for withdrawing the unemployment dole before making other provision for the unemployed, was that it would have been difficult to get employers and workmen to contribute to the scheme whilst the unemployment dole was being paid.

Lloyd George tried to blame for the unemployment which exists, first the moulders, because their strike disorganised certain industries, and secondly the boilermakers. He said that there was a shortage of boilermakers, that all sorts of work, including the making of locomotives, was being held up on that account. He would like to have locomotives made at Woolwich, but he was held up for lack of boilermakers. The Boilermakers' Union could not supply the men who were lacking, nor would it allow men who were not members of the Union, not technically boilermakers by trade, to do the work. The Boilermakers' Union was, in fact, "the bottle neck," which was holding up the industrial process.

John Hill, later on, revealed to the Congress that Lloyd George's words had made a great impression on the Labour deputation. He said indeed that one of his colleagues on the deputation was prepared to provide from the membership of his own Union men to fill the gap that the boilermakers were said to be unable to fill and unwilling to allow others to fill. The other members of the Parliamentary Committee were not pleased by Hill's revelations, and the Chairman tried to check his recital. It transpired that there were 100 unemployed boilermakers in London. Lloyd George was exposed again. As for the moulders' strike the atmosphere thrown around it by Thomas was that the Parliamentary Committee and the Government were working together to bring it to an end, but the moulders' representative insisted that the Government had done nothing to bring the parties together.

J. R. Clynes stated that during the war there had been accumulated under Part II. of the Insurance Act £19,000,000 of unemployment insurance money. The increase from 7/- to 11/- a week for unemployment insurance was to be paid out of the interest on that £19,000,000, though obviously the insured persons have a moral right to the £19,000,000 itself. There was also considerably over £1,009,000 in the National Relief Fund. Yet the unemployed dole is suddenly cut off.

A resolution was carried unanimously demanding work or maintenance for the unemployed—the old, old story which will continue until the people's revolution.

THE PROPOSED TRADE UNION EXECUTIVE.

Harry Gosling moved a resolution:—

"(1) To substitute for the Parliamentary Committee a Trades Union Congress General Council, to be elected annually by Congress.

"(2) To prepare a scheme determining the composition and methods of election of the general council.

"(3) To make arrangements for the development of administrative departments in the offices of the General Council, in the direction of securing the necessary officials, staff, and equipment to secure an efficient trade union centre.

"Further, in order to avoid overlapping in the activity of working-class organisations, the Parliamentary Committee be instructed to consult with the Labour Party and the co-operative movement, with a view to devising a scheme for the setting up of departments under joint control, responsible for effective national and international service in the following and any other necessary directions:—

"(*a*) Research: To secure general and statistical information on all questions affecting the worker as producer and consumer by the co-ordination and development of existing agencies.

"(*b*) Legal advice on all questions affecting the collective welfare of the members of working-class organisations.

"(*c*) Publicity, including preparation of suitable literature dealing with questions affecting the economic, social, and political welfare of the people; with machinery for inaugurating special publicity campaigns to meet emergencies of an industrial or political character."

Robert Williams seconded this motion. He said that at the time of the railway strike the threat of the mediating committee that other unions would use sympathetic action had influenced both the brothers Geddes and the Press. Strange that Williams, who so often shouts "revolution" in public meetings, should have played the part of mediator.

BROMLEY WANTS A BODY THAT WILL ENLARGE STRIKES.

Bromley, of the Engine Drivers, his mind doubtless filled with memories of that strike, opposed the motion, saying that he did not like the proposed method of election and that it might produce a body anxious to close down a strike. He wanted a body that would enlarge a strike against capitalism. He suggested that the election should be by ballot vote of the members of the Unions.

Hodges, of the Miners' Federation, seconded the reference back, stating that there had not been time enough for the members to consider the scheme.

As a matter of fact the advanced elements in the M.F.G.B. are not satisfied with the official scheme. They say that the Central Council ought to include representatives of all the industries.

Certainly, the Council, in the interests of efficiency, should contain representatives of all the industries. The method of election requires careful consideration. Bromley's suggestion of a ballot vote of the whole of the membership is not entirely satisfactory, because a large proportion of the Trade Union membership fails to take a constant interest in the work of the Unions and their officials. The miners, with their delegates going from the pit to the district councils, and from the districts to the national conferences, will doubtless say unhesitatingly that the best method of election is through the Conferences, the delegates being instructed by the active men who attend the lodge meetings The industries in which are many unions with ancient and undemocratic structures, will find it more difficult to decide the form of representation. To give a representative to every Trade Union would make the Council very large. Industrial Unionism and Workers' Committees in the workshops would make it possible for the workers in all industries to be efficiently represented, but old-fashioned Trade Unionism blocks the way.

The refusal of the Government to modify its decision on the police strike was accepted without protest, and no action was taken regarding conscription.

The opportunists are still in control of the Trade Union Congress.

Foreign News.

"DEMOCRACY" IN ROUMANIA.

L'Humanité, December 7th, reports that Bratiano dissolved the elected Chamber and governed with the King by means of arbitrary decrees. According to the new Constitution the members of the Constituent Assembly were to be elected by universal suffrage and proportional representation; but in Transylvania and the greater part of Bukovina proportional representation was withheld, in order to stifle minority voices. In the old kingdom 300,000 citizens of voting age were kept off the register and 400,000, a large proportion of whom were industrial workers, were mobilised to prevent them voting.

As a protest the Socialists, the Peoples' League, and other parties have withdrawn their candidates. 420,000 voters have abstained from voting, and out of the 880,000 who voted, 277,000 have deliberately spoilt their ballot papers. Thus out of 2,000,000 citizens only 680,000, or 30 per cent., have voted. Seven Socialists were elected in spite of themselves, but will refuse to take their seats. In spite of everything, Bratiano's so-called Liberal Party, the party of the Government, has been badly beaten—only two of its members have been elected.

TURKESTAN CELEBRATES SOVIET REVOLUTION.

L'Humanité, December 7th, 1919.—A Reuter telegram announces that the second anniversary of the October (November) Revolution was celebrated with great enthusiasm in the whole of Turkestan. Thousands of Mussulmans marched in procession through the streets of Tashkent singing the Marseillaise and the International. A feature of the celebrations was the participation of 30 proletarian organisations and 10,000 Mussulman children carrying portraits of Lenin and Trotski.

GERMAN SOCIALISTS, RIGHT AND LEFT.

The German Independent Social Democrats, having decided to join the Third International, the Government Social Democrats are trying to entice them back into alliance with them by urging that there is danger of a military *coup d'état* to re-establish the monarchy. *Vorwaerts*, the Government Socialists' organ, demands the trial of the War Minister, Reinhardt, to whom its Party gave office. Such utterances are but sprats sent out to attract the Independent mackerel. Similar tactics are practised by the same kind of people here.

BELGIAN OPPORTUNISTS.

Vandervelde, Anseele, Destrée and Wauters, four Social-Patriots, have joined the Belgian bourgeois Government under the leadership of Delacroix, of the Catholic Party. And Vandervelde is the secretary of the Second International!

A LITERARY EFFORT.

The Curtain Group made their second public appearance on Sunday last at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, where three short plays were produced before a crowded house. Mr. Ion Swinley, the author of the first play, "The Lifting of the Dark," interpreted the character of the crucified seer who alone foresaw the coming of the light, but, although obviously inspired by the impalpable purpose of the play, he was unable to carry conviction across the footlights.

The second play, "Old Boyhood," by H. F. Rubenstein, was in lighter vein, the occasional depression, masquerading as unlifting tragedy, which afflicts the leisured introspective mortal at intervals, being revealed by circumstance as merely an ephemeral mood and affording the dear Old Mentor (Mr. Fisher White) subject for philosophising.

Of a deeper nature was the third play, "The Disciple," by Jack Edwards, very moving in its revelation of the conflict between the aspirations of the poor and the deadening facts of their everyday existence. A working-class youth becomes imbued with Christian ideals and attempts to bring them into relation with life. As a result he is misunderstood, bullied, scorned, and finally ostracised by his former friends, and the dreamer, driven back upon his dreams has reached the borderland of insanity. Each Christian act involves distress for someone near to him driving home the fact that practical Christianity is only for the well-to-do. Mr. Ion Swinley played the title role most convincingly, and Miss Elaine Limouzin the complex part of the mother with unfailing skill and sympathy.

M. W.

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A GAGE OF BATTLE!

LITVINOFF'S LETTER RETURNED UNOPENED!

AN ANSWER TO THE SPECIAL LABOUR CONGRESS!

So the Soviet peace terms, enclosed in a letter from Comrade Litvinoff, have been returned unopened by the British representative at Copenhagen, who was not authorised to receive any communications from that source. The same plan has been followed by the representatives of the other Allied Powers.

The act is a brutal insult. But more important is the hideous policy from which it sprang.

What is that policy?

Let us face it clearly. Nothing but misfortune and self-reproach can come from blinding our eyes to the truth. If the British Government were about to cease attacking Soviet Russia, it would be only too anxious to negotiate in order that it might wring from Soviet Russia the largest possible concessions in money, land, forests, minerals, opportunities to build railways, and so on.

Very disingenuous is Lloyd George's reply to Mr. Hogge on December 15th:

> "If the Bolshevists want to make peace they must make peace with the people with whom they are making war—with General Denikin's force and General Koltchak's force, and the other forces. They have to make peace among themselves first."

Lloyd George has previously boasted that Denikin, Koltchak, and the others began fighting on the persuasion of his Government and that they could not have continued fighting without its help.

There can be no shadow of doubt that the policy behind this gage of battle is that of utterly crushing Soviet Russia, of grinding her under the heel of the conqueror till she remains no more. It is the policy of exterminating her builders to the last man, to the last woman, allowing no quarter, pressing ever upon them with warfare and starvation, with wholesale massacre, and finally by executing as rebels the last leaders of the great heroic band of pioneers.

Then, on the ruins of the Workers' Soviets, with harsh military coercion holding down her exhausted people, the policy symbolised by returning the letter of peace terms unopened is to build again the rule of oppressive capitalism, the capitalist factions that joined in destroying the Soviets taking each a share of the limitless wealth of mighty Russia, and quarrelling amongst themselves over the spoils.

Those friends of the Soviets who mistakenly thought the British Government about to conclude peace with Soviet Russia will now realise their mistake. We implore them not to be gulled again, but to join in steady and unrelaxing effort to stop, or if we are not yet strong enough to stop, at least to hinder, in every way that we can the attack on Soviet Russia. We urge them to join in pressing on to the establishment of the Soviets in Britain, for this is the surest help that we can give to the international workers' revolution and to the people of our land. Only trouble at home will cause the Government to refrain from its attack on Communist Russia or any other country where Communism is established.

This insulting gage of battle flung at Comrade Litvinoff is the answer to the failure to act of the Westminster special Trade Union Congress.

The failure of the Westminster Congress clearly reveals three outstanding facts: (1) There must be a very much greater propaganda amongst the rank and file; (2) the leadership of the British Labour movement must be changed.

If we are to achieve anything in the great war with militant Capitalism, we must act; resolutions are useless.

The Red Army is making splendid progress against its most dangerous enemy, Denikin. It continues to drive back Koltchak. But the Russian people are being worn out by the continued warfare, and the entire world of Capitalism joins in the attack.

THE MURDEROUS GENERAL DYER.

Amid the hypocritical cries of "Bolshevik Atrocities" and "Shaking Hands With Murder" comes the news of terrible doings by the British military machine in India. During the passive resistance protests against the oppressive Rowlatt Acts some disorder occurred. How far the people were provoked to riot will perhaps never be known. But the handling of the situation by General Dyer was indeed remarkable. According to his own evidence he issued a proclamation warning the people not to assemble under pain of being dispersed by force of arms. He issued his proclamation in the morning; in the afternoon he heard that the people were assembling at Jallianwala Bagh. Off he marched at once, with 25 British and 25 Indian riflemen, and 40 Gurkhas armed with kukris. He discovered 5,000 people at a meeting, and within 30 seconds ordered fire to be opened. No warning was given - perhaps many of the people had not even heard of the proclamation. That could not be helped: martial law had been flouted and he considered it his duty to disperse the crowd by rapid fire. The firing went on for ten minutes, when the soldiers ran short of ammunition. The passage was not wide enough to allow the armoured cars to enter the enclosure or, he says, he would have used also machine-gun fire. When asked if he had taken any measures to attend to the wounded he said: "No, certainly not: it was not my job." About 500 Indians were killed and 1,500 wounded. General Dyer thought his action would create "a wide impression throughout the Punjab."

Under General Dyer's management 261 Indians were whipped; 6 of them in the Bazaar. In the street where Miss Sherwood was assaulted, Indians were flogged on a triangle, and between the 19th and the 21st, when the order was revoked by higher authority, any Indian passing down the street was made to crawl on all fours. General Dyer looks upon public lashing as producing "a good impression."

The "Times" reports that on more than one occasion Lord Hunter, the chairman of the Investigating Committee, had to suppress "unseemly demonstrations" by members of the public attending the inquiry where these facts were revealed.

Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the Lieut.-Governor, telegraphed at the time approving General Dyer's action. This is capitalist militarism; it is the same in all nations.

The Wireless Press reports that an Indian Bolshevik Commission has reached Samara to enter into relations with Soviet Russia. We hope the news is accurate: that way freedom lies. Soviet Communism makes a ready appeal to Eastern peoples: it would spread unchecked amongst them if only Western Capitalist militarism were removed.

LANSBURY'S EFFORT.

George Lansbury has bravely announced that his policy is to use all the powers possessed by the Borough Council, though undoubtedly this will greatly increase the Rates. The Borough of Poplar, where Lansbury is Mayor and there is an overwhelming Labour majority, is a borough of very poor people: when the Rates go up, the rents will rise with them. The poor will suffer under the increase and resent it, even though they know it is right that Council employees should be paid Trade Union rates and that various improvements should be made. The outcome, unless revolutionary feeling grows very speedily, may be that the poor—fearing the continued rising of the rents—will at the next election return a set of reactionaries to the Borough Councils.

Then, perhaps, Lansbury will realise that the effort to help the poor under capitalism is like carrying water in a sieve and perhaps he will then become a Revolutionary.

"NEVER AGAIN"!

THE FRANCO-BRITISH NEGOTIATIONS.

The negotiations now going on between the governments of Clemenceau and Lloyd George seem to have but one object: to build up a set of more or less secret agreements precisely similar to those which led to the Great War and brought Great Britain into it.

"Never Again", "The War to end War" and so on were watchwords constantly heard during the war. Already they seem to be almost forgotten.

The fact is we cannot say "never again" with any security until the capitalist system is abolished. Go for that and do not believe the absurd fables that would make a devil of Clemenceau and a pacifist saint of Lloyd George. They are a couple of political sharpers doing the bidding of the great capitalist interests behind the scenes.

IRELAND.

The Government has decided not to "settle" the Irish question this session. It contents itself with applying the iron heel of coercion. Now it has made another absurd raid for popular personalities, some of whom it has succeeded in capturing and shipping to this country. Were the situation not so tragic, it would be farcical.

£200,000 FOR THE SECRET SERVICE.

On December 8th the Government brought the Secret Service estimates to Parliament and secured £200,000 for the Secret Service. The Government spokesman "could not state how the money is to be spent."

It is to be spent on spying on *you* if you are working to overthrow capitalism!

SABOTAGE.

At a meeting of coal, iron and steel capitalists in Sheffield, Mr. Charles P. Markham urged that if the Bill to limit coal profits became law the coal owners should supply coal unscreened and unwashed. "The Government would soon get tired of that."

AN EXAMPLE TO BRITISH M.P.s.

The Italian Socialist M.P.s moved a resolution in the Chamber for the recognition of the Soviet Government. It received 124 votes, but 289 votes were cast against it. British Labour Members of Parliament have not shown that courage.

A comprehensive motion was carried for non-intervention in Russia, cessation of the blockade, and the establishment of diplomatic and commercial relations with all *de facto* Governments which have arisen from the break up of the Tsarist Empire.

An amendment by the Socialists that uncultivated or badly cultivated land should be expropriated in favour of agricultural workers, and that the State and trade unions should control the factories as a step towards nationalising industry, was carried.

LABOUR IN IRELAND. By Nora Connolly.

AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS' STRIKE TACTICS.

Though the magnitude of the National Campaign being carried on in Ireland for the last few years has largely filled the outsider's view of Ireland, and inside Ireland has monopolised much attention; all Ireland is aware of the tremendous strides Irish labour has made.

We in Ireland have to deal with an entirely recent growth, and because of that we are working both under advantages and great disadvantages. With the growth of revolutionary feeling in Ireland, caused principally by the revolutionary outbreak of 1916, a change has come in the minds of the people. We had been so long held down, so many rights as a nation and as a distinct race had been denied us, that to a great extent all our woes and troubles were held to be due to our political enslavement, and until we had freed ourselves from that it seemed that no hope could be entertained of a betterment in our lives. Trade unions we had, of course, but they were looked upon as a means of getting more wages, not as something which had as their object a change in the system under which we lived.

But in Ireland the people are now convinced, as they are determined that a change must soon come in our national life, that we must have political independence. To a great majority political independence will not be sufficient unless accompanied by a change in our economic life.

The death of James Connolly has sanctified his teachings and his work, and to-day, all over the country, the doctrines of James Connolly are regarded as embodying the true spirit of Freedom. Witness the number of men now in the Union for which he worked when alive. At his death the membership was between five and ten thousand in ten branches; now it has one hundred and twenty thousand, and about four hundred and twenty branches.

As I have stated, we are working under advantages and disadvantages. We have the advantage of sowing the seed in virgin and very receptive soil. We also have the disadvantage of having to deal with people who, until the last three years, had no conception of what organised labour might be able to do to assert itself. We are dealing with a people whose enthusiasm for the new Evangel is so great that they expect miracles to be performed by it. We are dealing with people who cannot understand why we must take things as they happen and deal with them. They expect us to make things happen, and when they have happened to carry out that happening to a glorious victory. It is enlivening and cheering to have such enthusiasm to deal with, but then sometimes it is hard to make the crowd understand that enthusiasm does not always work miracles.

We are dealing with people who are free from theories as to the class war and the social revolution. They have never studied the question; they do not know that to some the class war and the social revolution are scientific problems. They will not listen to theories as to how the class war came about because they know it is on. And recognising that fact they carry on the warfare in their own way. They have concrete examples of the class war in every county in Ireland. They know that the reason they are without land is that others have the land. They know that the land belongs to them, and that is sufficient knowledge for them; all they wish to know is how are they to get the land back. They want to be given a practical illustration of how the land will come back to them, its rightful owners, no theories as to how it was taken from them.

The loss of land to them is accepted as being the source of all the evils they suffer under at present; if they get the land back—every working man and woman, every child, will have an opportunity to live, to be educated, to be free from the spectre of want in their old age. Therefore they must have the land.

To illustrate the effect of this reasoning on the part of the workers I have taken from the country towns and districts, and in no case touching any large town, reports of strikes which have happened.

The first on my list is the farm labourers' strike in County Meath. I am taking it first because of the number of men affected and the great organising power displayed by the workers who took part in it.

FARM LABOURERS' STRIKE IN MEATH AND KILDARE.

When the farm labourers of Meath decided to strike to enforce their demands for better wages and working conditions, the farmers in that county were not at all alarmed. Tillage in Co. Meath is almost a negligible quantity, though compulsory tillage during the war gave it a fillip. The farmers of Meath made their money from cattle. Meath is known as the best pasturage in Ireland, and the demand for its stock is so great that there are fairs every week in Navan, markets in Trim and surrounding towns every week, and in outlying towns such as Drogheda, fairs are held for the sale of cattle every fortnight. The Co. Meath farmers, therefore, considered the compulsory tillage order as an obstacle to the amassing of as much money as they might if they were allowed to give all their lands to pasturage.

Therefore they thought that when the strike was on they could hang up matters by refusing to concede the men's demands, and let the harvest go ungarnered. Then they could make representations to the Government that they were perfectly willing to carry out the tillage order, but the labourers were so exorbitant in their demands, and so obstinate in their behaviour that it was impossible for them to carry out the tillage order save at a great loss and inconvenience to themselves. The Government not being too hard on capitalist representations, would not be so strict in enforcing its order next year as regards tillage. In the meantime, the farmers could sell their cattle, the labourers would be the only ones to feel the pinch, and the Union to which they belonged would be at a great financial loss.

But these farmers failed to reckon with the labourers. The labourers saw as well as the farmers that if the cattle belonging to the farmers whose men were on strike were allowed to be sold, that their chances of success were very small; therefore they decided that no farmers whose men were on strike should sell their cattle. When they had decided this point they set about devising ways and means of stopping the sale of cattle.

The extraordinary thing about this matter was that in the various districts the labourers came to this decision without any outside help, and set out to their headquarters to discuss it. Since practically all the herd and farm labourers in the county were members of the Union, and were employed by the farmers, the labourers knew what farmers were likely to sell cattle, when it was likely to be removed, and to what fair or market it would probably be sent for sale.

They decided to picket the roads; the young men on bicycles, while the old men and boys were left to picket the stations in case any cattle were to be sent by train. Also they had men at all the fairs and markets from the various districts who knew the farmers and could state whether the cattle offered for sale was from farmers whose men were on strike or not.

In the case of cattle belonging to farmers who had not settled with the labourers, the pickets informed the dealers and buyers that it was only "scab" cattle and he should not buy it; if he bought it he would not be allowed to entrain it; nor would he be able to get anyone to drive it to its destination. The dealers were in all cases favourable to the labourers because their business compelled them to go from place to place and would be imperilled if they roused bad feeling against themselves. So after one or two fairs no cattle would be bought in the local fairs or markets by the dealers unless the seller could show a permit from the Strike Committee.

Farmers who had settled with their labourers, or who were not involved in the strike soon realised that if they wanted to sell their cattle they must have permits to take their cattle to the fairs or markets to sell them. Dealers, when they bought cattle, took the permits from the farmers and brought them to the Strike Committee to ask if the permits were all right. This was necessary, for in some cases, when the dealers had not taken the permits from the farmers, the farmers attempted to make the one permit do for two or three times. Finding this out the Strike Committee changed the wording on the permits and made them state expressly the number of cattle and the date of the particular fair or market for which it was intended to be used. Some of the dealers, when entraining the cattle, put the permits on the wagons carrying their cattle, so that there should be no doubt that the cattle were all right and that their transit would not be interfered with by the strikers. The permits were brief and to the point. They merely stated:—

Permit Mr ..... to take ..... cattle or sheep to ..... fair or market on ..... This permit only holds good for this occasion.

Signed.
By order of the Strike Committee.

Then the permit was stamped with the branch stamp.

When the farmers found that their local fairs were useless to them, they decided to send the cattle to Drogheda and Dublin cattle markets and sell them there.

The first idea of the farm labourers was to picket the stations and prevent the cattle from being put on the wagons. One of the most amusing of these ventures is told of Mr Leonard, D.L., who decided to entrain 14 sheep. The sheep were sent to the station under the protection of two policemen. However, there was so large and determined a crowd at the station that the police decided not to force their way through with the sheep. They went away and came back the next day. The pickets, composed, as I said, of mostly old men and boys, were grouped around the road leading to the station. The police were reinforced; this time there were fourteen sheep and fourteen police. The strikers were lined along the road in an orderly manner, and when they were told by the policemen in charge to move on they merely smiled. The police were then ordered to fix bayonets and charge the crowd. Still the crowd merely smiled and did not move. They were exhorted to move away "for God's sake" and not to make any trouble. By this time the strikers decided to let all the stock be entrained. In answer to a second appeal to make no trouble, the strikers began to move back slowly until the road was clear to the station for the police and the sheep. After some time the sheep were sent off. But pickets had taken the number of the wagons, and had sent a telegram to the branch officials in the town for which the sheep were destined, telling them to "stop wagon No. so and so, 14 sheep; scab." When the sheep arrived the wagon was labelled as scab material and none of the drovers who were members of the same Union would touch the sheep. Alas! the sheep came back to Mr. Leonard, D.L.

The strikers decided that these were the best tactics. All cattle were allowed to be sent by train to Dublin or Drogheda. When the cattle arrived at the Dublin cattle market, even though accompanied by the police, the drovers would not allow them in unless accompanied by a permit from the local strike headquarters, the result was that all cattle not accompanied

Continued on next page

LABOUR IN IRELAND.

Continued from page 1581.

by a permit had to be returned. The labourers gave as their reason for these tactics that the cost of carriage was great, the double journey increasing the cost to the farmers, also the journey caused the deterioration of the cattle. Whilst the cattle were being shipped to Dublin and back again the grass was going, the cattle would not be able to be fed off it and became thus a source of expense to the farmers instead of a source of profit.

The farmers by this time were almost at their wits' end. They decided to hire a special train to carry their cattle to loyal Belfast. They reckoned that there at least there would be no obstruction to selling their cattle. The strikers heard of this plan. The train was to go through Meath, Drogheda, and so on to Belfast. The man who had been in charge of the Dublin cattle market was sent to Belfast to get in touch with the drovers there, and in conjunction with the organiser stationed in Belfast to do what could be done to prevent the sale of the cattle. The strikers decided to put a picket on all the stations through which the train would go and take the numbers of the wagons so that they could wire them to Belfast.

Unfortunately, on the night before the special train was to start some "evilly disposed persons" wrecked a train on the line through Meath and the cattle train could not go as intended. It was sent to Dublin the following day, and from thence to Belfast. The military who had been drafted in great numbers had placed a picket on all the stations: therefore the strikers' pickets could not take the numbers of the wagons. Nothing daunted, the strikers sent a wire to Belfast telling them to "Stop all cattle." I should mention here that the military made a great fuss in the area. They paraded the districts in their tin hats, with their rifles and other accoutrements to overawe the strikers. They flew around all the districts on motor bikes and motor lorries, always making as great a fuss as they possibly could, and looking infernally busy. But in reality they did nothing. Besides the military ten times as many as the usual number of police were drafted into the county.

By the time the cattle arrived in Belfast the officials there were ready to receive them. The drovers there had promised that they would refuse to handle the cattle in any way whatsoever. After some difficulty the cattle were got into one of the cattle markets. But there were no dealers who would buy the cattle. Word was sent to the farmers in Meath telling them of the state of affairs and asking whether the cattle should be returned. The farmers were demented: they did not know what to advise: they did not want the cattle to be sent back again, so the cattle were left in Belfast until the strike was settled.

That is only one phase of the agricultural labourers' strike. There are very many interesting things that could be told of it.

Pickets were placed on the shops in the different districts, who prevented the farmers' households from being supplied with goods. Bread coming from Dublin was escorted by the pickets and the driver was not allowed to stop at any of the farmer's houses. Eventually the police took a hand and went out to meet the driver and give him protection while he served the farmers with bread. The strikers did not know of this action of the police until they appeared on the scene and outnumbered the pickets. A fight ensued. One of the pickets got on his bike at last and tore away to the nearest strike headquarters. He came back with reinforcements and once more the farmers were prevented from receiving bread. The police then decided to buy a large amount of bread from the driver of the van and send it round to the farmers. The pickets heard of this, went to the housekeeper of the barracks and found out how much bread the police usually got; then when the driver reached the police barracks only the usual amount of bread was allowed into it.

At Kilmossan several farmers grouped themselves together to save each other's hay. The pickets informed headquarters; a band of strikers was sent to the field, who arrested the farmers, took their forks away from them, marched them to the strike headquarters and imprisoned them. The farmers were kept there for hours until the police came to rescue them. The strikers allowed the police to release the farmers, but when the farmers asked for their forks they were told to identify them. Each farmer did so but the strikers would not give the forks to the farmers. They made each farmer identify his fork and the police hand each fork over to the farmer. They would not hand them over collectively; they had to be given separately.

1,000 wagons of stock were held up during the strike. Needless to say, the farmers gave in and the farm labourers won their strike.

The above article is the first of a series on Labour in Ireland, by Nora Connolly. The series will include accounts of a town strike in Boyle, a creamery strike in a country town in Limerick, a fight between farmers and labourers in Limerick, and various strikes and struggles in Dungarvon, Waterford and elsewhere.

IN THE STREAM OF REVOLUTION.

By Maxim Gorki.

It should be observed that this was written about December, 1917, and therefore is before the time when M. Gorki entered into collaboration with the Bolshevik Government.

Women and the Revolution.

The most interesting letters which I receive are from women. These letters, troubled with the impressions of the present time of upheaval, are full of anguish, of resentment and indignation; but they are not cold like those of the men; in every letter the woman echoes the cry of the living soul, oppressed with the indescribable misery of the time in which she is living.

These letters give the impression of having been written by only one woman, by the Mother of Life, by her who gave to the world all the races and all the peoples, by her who has carried and will carry in her womb all the geniuses, by her who has led man to convert the rough animal instinct into the sweet ecstacy of love. They are the cry of the being who in life has brought poetry, who has inspired art, and who is continually filled with the inextinguishable inspiration of beauty, life and joy.

The letters of which I speak are full of the lament of the mother over the corruption of humanity, which has become cruel, savage, vulgar, and dishonest, whilst morals have become coarse. These letters are full of imprecations against the Bolsheviki, the peasants and the workers, and call down upon them all the horrors, all the punishments, and all manner of tortures.

"Hang them all, shoot them all, destroy them all!" cry the women who were the wives and nurses of all the heroes and of all the saints, of all the geniuses and of all the criminals, of all the rogues and of all the honest men; mothers of Christ and of Judas, of the gentle and affectionate Francis of Assisi, and of the sad enemy of every joy, Savonarola; the mother of Philip II., who only laughed once in his life, when he heard the news of the massacre on the night of St. Bartholomew, the greatest crime of Catherine de Medici, who was only a woman and a mother. The mother, the object of the greatest reverence on the part of man, she who leads him to high and beautiful things, she, the source of life and poetry, cries: "Kill them! Hang them! Shoot them!"

We find ourselves confronted by a fearful and dark contradiction, which may well destroy the aureole with which history has encircled women. Why cannot women entirely understand their great function of civilisation, not feel their power of creation, and not abandon themselves blindly to the desperation raised in their maternal bosoms by the chaos of these revolutionary days?

I do not wish to plunge into this question: I will only make the following observations:—

You women know that birth is always accompanied by labour pains, that the new being is born in blood; thus the subtle irony of blind nature wishes it to be. In the moment of delivery you scream as if you were animals, but when you clasp to your breast the tiny newly-born you smile with the beautiful smile of the Madonna.

I do not wish to blame you for the animal cries, for they are produced by an intolerable torment, and I, too, though not a woman, almost faint at the sight of these torments. But I hope with all my heart that soon you will smile the smile of the Madonna, you will clasp to your hearts the newly-born sons of Russia.

Forty years of civil war in the eighteenth century produced in France a disgusting brutality, an arrogant cruelty, but think what a beneficent influence a Julia Recamier exercised! And many are the stories of the examples and influence of women upon the development of humanitarian ideas and sentiments. It is right that you mothers are excessive in your love of humanity, but you must also only be moderate in hatred!

The Bolsheviki? Yes, I really believe that they are human beings like us, born of mothers, and I do not see in them anything more animal than in us. *The best of them are notable personalities of whom the Russia of the future will be proud*, and our sons and nephews will admire their energy. Their actions may be violently criticised, and ironically scorned, and scorn and criticism are heaped on the Bolsheviki in a larger measure even than they have deserved. Their adversaries surround them with an oppressive atmosphere of hatred, and that which is more dangerous, they are surrounded with the servile and hypocritical friendship of those who prowl like dogs around the powerful, to make use of them like wolves—but these, we hope, even like dogs, will be put to death.

Do I defend the Bolsheviki? *No, I am working against them*—but I defend the men whose sincere convictions I know, whose personal honesty I know, as I know the sincerity of their devotion to the good of the people. I know that they are making *the most cruel scientific experiment on the live body of Russia*. I know how hateful it is, but I prefer to be just. Oh yes! they have committed many grave and serious errors—God also blundered when he made more stupid people than was necessary—and Nature has also blundered in many things, but shall we judge them from the point of view of our desires, which may be opposed to their desires, by their imperfections? Without knowing what will be the political results of their actions, I maintain that from a psychological point of view the Bolsheviki have already rendered a great *service* to Russia, raising in the masses an interest in the present events, for without this interest our country would have been destroyed.

But now it will never be destroyed: because the people have wakened from their apathy to a new life, and new forces have matured within them; these new forces do not fear the folly of the political innovators or the avidity of the foreign marauders; they are therefore sure of their invincibility. Russia is fighting in a convulsive way through the terrible and painful labour of deliverance—would even you not desire that a new Russia, beautiful, good and humane, could see the light as soon as possible? Let me tell you, oh mothers, that madness and hatred are bad midwives.

To be continued next week.

PARLIAMENT AS WE SEE IT.

DECEMBER 8TH.—Additional expenditure, causing increased taxation, will be necessary to carry out the recommendations of the Committee on Old Age Pensions. When money is to be spent on killing people or suppressing the Russian Soviet Republic, no questions are asked and the bill is presented to the House when the deed is done. But poor old age pensions are left to starve while the Government "considers"!

AUSTRIA.

Mr. Harmsworth declared that British subjects in Austria had many opportunities of returning to this country by free trains; that now, no more will be run. He seems to be under the impression that people earning their living there need only come to England to find work. But the fallacy of this is proved by the case told me of a lady who tried for work in London, and when she told she had been in Austria all through the war, was turned out of the Employment Bureau!

CONSPIRACY AGAINST SOVIET RUSSIA.

DECEMBER 9TH.—Colonel Sir H. Greenwood stated in reply to Commander Kenworthy (L.) that: "Passports are not at present issued for Soviet Russia in accordance with the general policy decided upon at Paris and adopted by the Allies." Such a policy can only be dictated by fear.

REVOLUTIONARY PROPAGANDA.

Major Baird says he knows that there are people plotting to set up a "Tyrannical Government" on the lines of the Russian Soviet. Since the British Government relies on reports from people of the Colonel Ward type, how can the various Government officials dare to maintain as facts what they hear in this unreliable way!

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES.

All the small votes are summed up under the vague heading of Supply. In this category money for the Secret Service is voted, the Whitehall Cenotaph and endless other activities, including the Foreign Office. This latter also included £120,000 for "A Caucasus Military Mission." In explaining the purpose of this grant Sir H. Greenwood said the Mission was decided upon at the end of 1917; that Captain White was in command, and "this Mission met with the greatest difficulty, especially after the collapse of the old Russian Empire. . . . . ." It would seem as though Sir H. Greenwood had some reason in making this extraordinary mis-statement, for the Bolsheviks were already a power in 1917, or is Sir H. Greenwood not aware of that?

DECEMBER 10TH.—The total charge of the Miss Douglas-Pennant Inquiry is estimated at £9,000.

EDUCATION IN SOVIET RUSSIA.

Mr. Fisher maintains that the Government has not a sufficient amount of "reliable" information about the educational system in Soviet Russia. Then it is entirely the fault of the Government, as the DREADNOUGHT and other Socialist papers have published many facts and the decree on education is easily procurable.

No REPRIEVE.

DECEMBER 11TH.—Mr. Bonar Law announced that there was no intention to release the Irish prisoners or withdraw the proclamations under the Crimes Act before introducing the promised Home Rule Bill. In other words the Government means to feed the antagonism of the Irish still more by this unconciliatory attitude.

FAMINE.

Mr. Bonar Law confessed openly that grain destined for Austria was held up in Trieste because of the difficulty of payment! He also acknowledged that the present isolation of Russia contributed to the cause of the famine in Central Europe. An opportunity to help in this direction offers itself in accepting the Soviet Peace Offer, and thus remove this cause of famine!

. . .

The unemployment problem will not be dealt with before the Recess; therefore, the rank and file should set about doing what the Commons leaves undone.

COAL.

The Second Reading of the Coal Industry (Emergency) Bill was postponed, owing to the hostile attitude of the House, notably the Labour Members. The Bill would have introduced the limitation of profits on coal to 1/2 per ton of output.

HOUSING.

DECEMBER 12TH.—The Housing (Additional Powers) Bill was debated on December 8th, 11th, and passed on December 12th. On following the debate it was more apparent than in connection with any measure how complicated the capitalist system makes this project. One has seen that a bribe of £150 has had to be offered to builders to induce them to start building. In a society where competition did not predominate no such difficulties could arise. It is absolutely futile to try to patch up a corrupt and worn-out system—the future belongs to the Communist system, if for no other reason than to escape from the entanglements caused by capitalism. Members of Parliament need not debate these futile patch-work measures through long nights if they would succumb to the inevitable new world!

M. O 'C.

JOHN WARD CORRECTED.

In reply to John Ward's account of the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly in Russia, we give the description of what actually took place given by two American women who were eye-witnesses of the event—Bessie Beatty and Louise Bryant.

This is John Ward's account:—

This Constituent Assembly, elected by universal suffrage, a suffrage broader than ours, meets in Petrograd with Kerensky as its President. Kerensky, being a pacifist who does not believe in war, has abolished the army and the police and left his Government without any protection from those who were prepared to destroy it. As the elected representatives of the Russian people were there fashioning the new Government and giving to the people a new chapter of their history, a gang of miscreants, not numbering at that time more than 300 or 400, surrounded the building and destroyed them as they came out, until out of some hundreds of men elected by the people not more than 180 are alive to-day. The rest were destroyed by these fellows with whom, you say, it is the interest of democracy not to interfere.

It is necessary to begin by pointing out that Kerensky was deposed from power before the Constituent Assembly was called. He did not arrange for the elections to the Constituent Assembly. It was for the Bolshevik Government to bring the Constituent Assembly into being, as well as to dissolve it.

As to the story that Kerensky was a pacifist, it is notorious that he desired Russia to continue in the war; that he stopped the truce in the trenches and re started the offensive, and that he re-established the death penalty in the Army which had been set aside by the revolution. Kerensky was not only Prime Minister, but Minister of War.

After he had been ousted from power Kerensky tried to muster what troops he could to attack the Soviets, and set out for Petrograd, but his attempt was a dismal failure.

Here are extracts from two proclamations of Kerensky after the Soviets had seized the power, and whilst he was fighting to regain his hold:—

Prikaz of the Minister-President Kerensky, dated at Gatchina: "I, Minister-President of the Provisional Government and Supreme Commander of all the armed forces of the Russian Republic, declare that I am at the head of regiments from the front who have remained faithful to the fatherland."

Telegram from Kerensky to the General in command of the Northern Front:—

"I order all the designated units to advance as quickly as possible."

These proclamations are given in John Reed's "Ten Days that Shook the World," published by Boni and Liveright, New York, 1919.

BESSIE BEATTY'S ACCOUNT.

"Its brief moment of existence began at four o'clock on the afternoon of January 18th, and it was dispersed at four o'clock the next morning by the "Do soidanya!" of a Russian sailor, who sleepily informed the members it was time to go home.

. . .

"Trotzky and Lenin had no hesitancy in declaring that, unless the Constituent Assembly was Bolshevik, it would not represent the people, and, therefore, must be dissolved.

"They said, quite truthfully, that the Assembly was chosen according to election laws made by the Coalition Government, and conducted by officials representative of that group, and of all the political rather than of the economic ideal. . . .

"A Bolshevik member read a statement declaring that the majority of the Constituent Assembly had refused to accept the demands of the People's Commissaries, which were the demands of the toiling masses and the economic revolution, and in so doing had become a counter-revolutionary body.

"With that the Bolsheviks left the hall. The Left S.R.s, headed by Marie Spiridonova and a handsome revolutionist named Konikoff, remained to offer a resolution that the Constituent Assembly recognise the peace steps of the People's Commissaries.

"The Left S.R.s got up quietly from their seats and departed from the Convention as the Bolsheviks had done. . . .

"I was appointed to defend the Constituent Assembly," said the commissary of the palace. "This meeting has become simply a party caucus, and we suggest that you retire to the headquarters of the Right S.R. . . .

"The guard yawned. President Chernoff demurred. The guns once more began to assume ominous positions.

"Why should we wait? We should arrest all! We should kill the counter-revolutionist Chernoff!" came in angry murmurs from factory workers and soldiers.

"The delegates looked from one to another. Some one moved a resolution to adjourn until five that afternoon. It was promptly adopted.

"The murmur of counter-revolutionists grew louder and louder. The soldiers and sailors flocked down the stairs, and crowded around the delegates. Some of the Bolshevik members, who had remained in the ball-room, surrounded Chernoff, and took him in safety through the hostile throng to the gate.

"Every man who walked out in the gray morning knew that the Constituent Assembly was at an end. . . .

"The Constituent Assembly never met again. At the hour when the delegates were supposed to reassemble, the Tauride Palace was dark."

(From the "Red Heart of Russia," by Bessie Beatty, war correspondent of the *San Francisco Bulletin*, published by the Century Co., New York, October, 1918.)

LOUISE BRYANT'S ACCOUNT.

"If any power in Russia could have broken the Soviets it would have been the Constituent and the Constituent vanished at the first attempt.

"How did it happen?" asked a surprised world. By bayonets? Yes, and no. It happened because the people were with the Soviets, and the bayonets were in the hands of the people. There was no force to oppose the Soviets.

"The Constituent Assembly delegates were elected on lists made up in September, and the Constituent Assembly was not called until the following January. The elections were held in November. The method of Russian elections is this: To vote for party and programme, the candidates being nominated by the Central Committee of the party. Now, the majority of the Constituent Assembly delegates were Socialist Revolutionists, and before the elections came the Socialist-Revolutionist Party had split. The majority of the members went with the party of the *Left*, but the Central Executive Committee was dominated by the *Right*. Therefore, the delegates to the Constituent Assembly did not represent the real feeling of the country at that time. Moreover the elections were held two weeks after the Bolshevik insurrection, when the country had not yet completely moved to the Left; Bolshevism had not yet accomplished itself. By January, when the Constituent had met, the country had swung. In other words, elections were held for the supreme organ of the kind of Government which was out of existence.

Marie Spiridonova, who keeps in closer touch with the peasants than anyone I know in Russia, told me that many of the peasants did not vote at all, and the delegates did not want to come. The one thing that was clear in their minds was that the Soviets of Soldiers' and Workers' Deputies should still go on, no matter what the Constituent Assembly did. . . .

"An All-Russian Peasants' Conference was held in Petrograd shortly after the Bolshevik uprising. The majority of the delegates came Right Socialist-Revolutionists—in three days they had joined the Left wing, had elected Spiridonova president, and gone over to the Soviets, marching in a body to Smolny. There were two All-Russian Peasants' Assemblies—both did the same thing.

"The Bolshevik leaders did not know how much power the Constituent Assembly would have, but as time went on one thing was clear—the Soviets and the Constituent Assembly absolutely cancelled each other. The main difference between the two bodies was that the Constituent Assembly *included the Cadets, which the November revolution had been made to put down.* . . .

"In opening the Constituent Assembly, Sverdlov, chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets—the new parliament—read the following declaration, which the Soviet Government demanded should be adopted by the Constituent as a working basis:— . . .

"At two o'clock in the morning of November 19th, the Declaration of the Rights of the Toiling and Exploited People was put to a vote, and defeated. The spokesman of the Bolshevik party demanded the floor, and read for his faction the following:—

"The great majority of the toiling masses of Russia, the workers, peasants, and soldiers, have demanded that the Constituent Assembly recognise the results of the great October revolution, the decrees of the Soviets demanding land, peace, and inspection of working conditions, and, above all, that it recognises the Soviet Government, and failing this demand of the great majority of the Russian working-class, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee has proposed to the Constituent Assembly that the Assembly acknowledge this demand

Continued on back page.

BETWEEN OURSELVES. By L. A. Motler.

PROFIT-SHEARING.

I note, Henry, from the cutting you sent me that your firm made a clearance of a good forty-thousand last year. And in sending me this interesting item of daylight burglary, you bid me ponder thereon and see how many beans there are in the pay envelope.

Of course this is not profiteering within the meaning of the Act, as no doubt you know. The Hon. Member for Boggart-Hole Clough will notice therefore that the question of a prosecution does not arise. (Cheers) Whatever is made over and above the cost of manufacture is strictly legitimate profit. (Hear, hear.) If we take away a small margin of profit—let me say legitimate profit—we take away the incentive of industry. (Applause.) And if there is no incentive in industry, our trade becomes the prey of our late enemies, and the object of the late war, the crushing of the menace of Prussian militarism, will not have been attained (hear, hear), and the blood of our young men will have been shed in vain. (Sobs.)

So you see, Henry, that's that. If your boss is not allowed to knock down your wages a bit, and so save as well in the economy of smaller pay envelopes the trade we have built up in the last five years will be nibbled by the Huns and the blood of our young men—yes, I see you can play it to slow music already.

However you will want to know "What would you Communists do about a thing like this here?" Well, if we were the Labour Party, we would tax 50 per cent of it and pay it over to the bankers who hold a lien on us for the "National" Debt. That would please the bankers, perhaps, and encourage them to lend us more when the next "war to end war" comes round the corner. But I daresay it would hardly satisfy you and others of the Dubb family.

What about sharing it out, then? As there are about forty millions of us, it sure wouldn't go far; but suppose we confine the whack-out to those in the firm who made that little bit of boodle. I understand there are two hundred odd workers there, and I will take two hundred as a round number. Well, sharing it all round in an equal sum, it amounts to £200 per each, or say nearly £4 a week. That, mind you, is over and above the wages you are getting now as an "incentive to industry." So if you are now getting £3 a week, you would then have £7.

This is hardly Communism, however. Let us take it from a Communist point of view, then.

Your trade is that of printing tram tickets. Under Communism tram tickets would, of course, be abolished; and you would say that would be jolly hard on the tram ticket printers. It would be throwing the whole 200 of you out of work, whereas you understood that Communism means work for all. It is however a question of "useful work or useless toil," as William Morris puts it. There is a shortage of food in the country, and it is surely more useful to the community to have two hundred people producing food than printing tram tickets.

You will want to know now that if there are no tram fares under Communism, who will pay the drivers and conductors their wages? As the fact is that Communism means free food, clothes and houses for ALL, the drivers and conductors will hardly need wages. What will the bakers, the tailors and the bricklayers do then, poor things? They will hardly, you say, bake bread, make clothes, and build houses for nothing. But as EVERYONE will have the right to FREE food, clothes and houses, as I said, the need for money for payment will not arise in any case.

You will object that if everybody could have all those good things, free, gratis, and for nothing, then nobody would work—the "incentive to industry" would be gone! As to this view, you have only to look right under your nose to find how absurd it is. You will find that very few of your own work-mates even would go in for that sort of thing. At present they work eight to twelve hours a day to pile up profits for directors and shareholders whom they never see. Do you think they would dislike working six (or fewer) hours a day for their own sakes and for the good of ALL?

This is, apart from these two facts, (a) that it is human nature to find some sort of work to do; even the "idle rich" have to put their hands to "social functions" and the like, even if it is only laying on a dab of mortar with a golden trowel; and, (b) as I pointed out in my article last week, food, clothes and houses do not grow on trees or fall down like manna from heaven.

At present, out of forty millions, only just over ten million are working—say one-third. Therefore if another third started tucking in, there would be as much work done in half the time. That is, of course, supposing all the present-day work was done—making furniture out of bacon-boxes, sheddy clothes, jerry-built houses, and adulterated food. Then there is the vast army of people who do not do any PRODUCTIVE work—commercial travellers, advertisement writers and managers, billposters, printers, clerks, M.P.s, editors, and writers of comic articles. One might as well pay them to lay 'Bradburys' end-to-end from John o' Groats to the Green Man.

So long as the Money System exists, you will have that so-called "vicious circle" of high prices and high wages chasing each other round the mulberry bush. The only remedy is to give the present system a Carpentier swipe and knock it out of the ring. That of course means Communism. And Communism is merely common-sense, and no soft sawder about it, either.

JOHN WARD CORRECTED.

Continued from page 1583.

as binding upon it. In accordance with the demands of the bourgeoisie, however, the majority of the Constituent Assembly has refused to accede to this proposal, thereby throwing the gage of battle to the whole of toiling Russia. The Socialist-Revolutionary Right wing, the party of Kerensky, Avksentieff, and Tchernoff, has obtained the majority of the Constituent Assembly. This party, which calls itself a *Socialist-Revolutionary* party, is directing the fight of the bourgeoisie against the workers' revolution, and is in reality a *bourgeois counter-revolutionary* party. In its present state the Constituent Assembly is a result of the relative party power in force before the great October revolution. The present counter-revolutionary majority of the Constituent Assembly, elected on the basis of obsolete party lists, is trying to resist the movement of the workers and peasants. The day's discussions have clearly shown that the Socialist-Revolutionist party of the Right, as in the time of Kerensky, makes concessions to the people, promises them everything, but in reality has decided to fight against the Soviet Government, against the socialist measures giving the land and all its appurtenances to the peasants without compensation, nationalising the banks, and cancelling the national debt.

"Without wishing for a moment to condone the crimes of the people, we announce that we withdraw from the Constituent Assembly, in order to allow the Soviet power finally to decide the question of its relations with the counter-revolutionary section of the Constituent Assembly."

Thereupon the Bolsheviki, Left Socialist-Revolutionists, and Unified Social Democrat Internationalists, left the Chamber. The remaining delegates continued to make speeches, but there was no heart in what they said; without the radical element the Constituent was dead.

"An hour after the passing of the above resolution of the Constituent Assembly—it was then four in the morning—the Cronstadt sailors who were on guard, began to murmur among themselves. They were tired, and they wanted to go home. Finally, one cleared his throat, and said: "All the good people have gone, why don't you go? The guards want to get some sleep. . . ." So ended the Constituent."

(From "Six Red Months in Russia," by Louise Bryant, an American observer in Russia before and during the Proletarian Dictatorship, published by Heinemann, London.)

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Sunday, Dec. 21st. 11.45 a.m.—Osborn Street, Whitechapel, Melvina Walker.

INDOOR.

Sunday, Dec. 21st. 400, Old Ford Road, 4-7 p.m. At Home (see advertisement).

Monday, Dec. 22nd. 7.30 p.m.—20, Railway Street, Poplar. W.S.F. Business Meeting.
8.30 p.m. W. S. F. Reading Circle.

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